

MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Tuesday June 16, 2009
2:00 PM
Council Chambers
Municipal Building
93 Cottage Street
Bar Harbor, Maine

I. *Call to Order at 2:04 PM by the chair, Patricia Samuel of the Greycote Inn representing the Bar Harbor Bed and Breakfast Association.*

Members present: Barry Teater, Karen Baksa, Chris Vincenti, Matt Horton, James Houghton (Howdy), Chris Fogg, Mark Hanscome, Randy Sprague, Patricia Samuel, Chair.

Also present: Anne Krieg, Planning Director; Lauren Suerth, Planning Intern; and Roy Kasendorf, owner of the Ullikana and The Yellow House bed and Breakfasts.

II. Excused Absences

There were no absences.

III. Minutes

There were no minutes from the previous meeting.

IV. Regular Business

A. Final Drafts

1. Downtown Business I and II, and Shoreland General Development

Roy Kasendorf, owner of the Ullikana and The Yellow House bed and breakfasts, requested that his two properties be included in the Core Commercial Area (CCA) district as noted in the Land Use Plan, along with Bass Cottage Inn, so he has the option of serving dinner to the public. Currently the three properties are in the Village Neighborhood District, which prohibits serving dinner. Kasendorf expressed concern that being in the CCA district would make his two historic properties vulnerable to destruction by future owners who might want the properties for other commercial uses, such as a hotel.

Pat Samuel suggested creating a new “Country Inn” district category that would allow serving dinner to the public but protect such properties from commercial encroachment. Some expressed fears that this would be considered spot zoning, an undesirable practice.

Anne Krieg recommended redistricting the three parcels as Lower Main Street Commercial Transitional (LMST). This would prohibit free-standing restaurants, bars, hotels and motels, yet allow country inns to serve dinner to the public. The Task Force agreed with the solution as the right balance between protecting historic structures from destruction by commercial interests and enabling B&B/country inn owners the fullest use of their properties.

Matt Horton questioned how far the LMST district change should extend. Task Force members agreed that it should apply only to the three properties at issue (Bass Cottage, Ullikana and The Yellow House) since the next two properties to the south are private residences. The next step is to make a map identifying the redistricting change.

Once EDTF makes this recommendation, the zoning change would have to be approved by the Planning Board and the Town Council before a Town Meeting vote.

To further protect historic houses, essential to Bar Harbor’s character and visitor appeal, Pat Samuel suggested updating the historic preservation register, and asked Roy Kasendorf to become involved in that effort.

2. B&B definitions

The current ordinance allows a maximum of three rooms for bed and breakfasts in the historic district along West Street. Anne Krieg suggested moving the maximum to six rooms, which would allow the bed and breakfasts to be more economically viable. Matt Horton asked why six, and why not 10, as is allowed in other districts.

It was suggested that maximum rooms should be based on the size of the houses.

3. Home Occupations

Anne Krieg described the three Home Occupation tiers and their locations. The Planning and Review Board recommends removing Indian Point Road from the middle tier since it is along Route 3 and 102 and within a rural or critical rural district.

B. Road repair, State DOT

Matt Horton proposed and led a discussion on the dire need to improve the road, sidewalk, bike lane and drainage on Route 3 from the Ireson Hill water tower to West Street. The heavily traveled road is the main entrance to town it is dangerous to drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists, but improvements have languished for years due to lack of funding and political will. Horton noted that Bar Harbor is consistently among the top three generators of tax revenue for the state but gets relatively little in return for highway and other infrastructure improvement. He said the town needs to present a strong, unified case to the Maine Department of Transportation and federal government to acquire funding for the Route 3 improvements.

Krieg mentioned that every two years she sends a Transportation Improvement Plan to MDOT requesting funds for road projects, and for the past seven years she has sent the same plan with the same five projects.

On a motion by Horton, seconded by Mark Hanscome, the Task Force unanimously agreed to urge the Town Council's support for the Transportation Improvement Plan, with the Route 3 project designated as the top priority. The motion also recommended that Horton be authorized as the liaison between the town, the MDOT and the federal government to secure political support and funding for the road improvements.

V. Public Comment

Due to lack of interest, the Task Force currently lacks one member each from Town Hill, College of the Atlantic and the real estate industry. Krieg suggested asking the Town Council to reclassify the three positions at-large seats.

Karen Baksa proposed that the Task Force formally urge the Design Review Board to stick to the letter of the code when considering the West Street Hotel proposal, citing concerns about the project's five-story height.

Krieg mentioned that the Task Force bylaws may not allow the body to make such recommendations to the Design Review Board. Pat Samuel noted that private citizen comments are appropriate at public hearings on the project, but cautioned that individual members cannot speak for the entire Task Force.

Discussion of Town Hill Moratorium Vote:

In light of the recent defeat of a proposed moratorium on large-scale development in Town Hill, Krieg questioned whether the Town Hill Village is a small rural village or a regional center. The Comprehensive Plan identifies it as a small-

scale commercial area. However, if citizens and the Town Council view this area as a regional corridor, then the Comprehensive Plan needs to be changed accordingly. Krieg recommended that Town Council send the issue back to the Task Force for discussion.

Pat Samuel questioned whether there is a way to avoid reworking the Comprehensive Plan right now. Krieg noted that dramatic differences in the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances make the town vulnerable to lawsuits by parties claiming that actions taken by the town are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

VI. Matters for Next Meetings

Map and ordinances codified, and formal recommendation to Town Council for changing the Bass Cottage Inn, Ullikana and The Yellow House properties from Village Neighborhood District to Lower Main Street Transitional.

Next area for review on the Future Land Use map is Route 3, extending from Bar Harbor.

VII. Confirm Date/Time/Location for Next Meeting

Krieg requested that the Task Force meet again in two weeks on June 30 at 2 p.m, the Task Force agreed.

XII. Adjournment at 3:15 p.m.

These minutes were prepared by Planning Department Intern, Lauren Suerth, for review at the June 30, 2009 Economic Development Task Force Meeting.

Barry Teater
Economic Development Task Force Secretary

Date